



# The GREGORIAN REVIEW



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# The GREGORIAN REVIEW

Studies in Sacred Chant and Liturgy

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English-language edition of the *Revue Gregorienne*

Bulletin of the School of Solesmes

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August 27, 1956

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## \*THE HORIZONTAL EPISEMA

by Dom Marie Alain Riviere, O.S.B.

### III.

#### The Episema and Interpretation

It is obvious from the above discussions that the episema holds an important place in the system of Gregorian esthetics as a major factor in its style.

We now must discuss the role which it fills on an equal basis with the stylistic one, that of a main principle of interpretation.

This role is in accord with its very nature, which is to emphasize and bring into relief whatever it is dealing with.

Its more or less frequent occurrence in a piece and the tempo which this suggests, the words which it selects to set into relief, the neumes which it stresses or broadens . . . these are all valuable indications for the singer who wishes not merely to work out an accurate rendering of the musical notation, but to give everything he sings an intelligent and expressive execution . . . a true "interpretation".

It is, however, important that we determine the limits of this interpretation and clarify its orientation so that we will not falsify the basic nature of chant, and also so that we may penetrate all the profundities of this music.

This can be summarized in three ways: this interpretation must be, come what may, *musical, religious* and *contemplative*.

\* Second and concluding installment of this article.

1) *Musical*

Gregorian interpretation must above all else be musical if it is to remain Gregorian, for this chant is true music, and the first rule which must be applied to it is to treat it as such.

This will also be the best means in most instances of rendering the original meaning of the episemas, for musical values transcend time, and in this regard, the principles which were valid for our ancestors still hold valid today. It would therefore be wrong to think it necessary to contradict one's musical instincts in order to sing chant. The surest rule, in fact, in order to sing the chant accurately, is to depend most heavily on one's artistic sensibility.

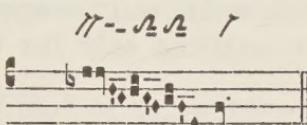
Therefore let us have no misunderstandings on this point; the episema can have innumerable meanings to the extent that there are nuances in music, but what it most assuredly cannot mean is something antimusical or contrary to the obvious interpretation of the melodic line, which it always is intended to sustain, expand and develop . . . never annihilate.

This annihilation, however, is just what will happen if, in the wonderful Introit *Deus in adjutorium*, for example (12th Sunday after Pentecost), we would permit the irresistible elan of the first phrase to be stifled by too great a broadening of the intonation because of a mistaken notion that this is called for because it is entirely episematic in the manuscripts.

What the episemas mean here, on the contrary, is a vigor and resonance at the beginning, from which the invocation then springs forth like an appeal: *in adjutorium meum intende*.

On the other hand, nobody would deny that a cadence heavily marked with episemas is so marked in order to indicate the gentleness and the ritard which ought to accompany the last notes of a chant melody.

We have, therefore, cases like the following, in which all the diamond-shaped notes are always marked as long in the manuscripts:



It is clear that the episemas warn us above all not to disarrange through irregularity such a beautiful, quiet and well-formed melodic descent. These are "reminder" episemas, negative signs, or, if you will, warning marks, the usefulness of which any choirmaster will appreciate.

Then, too, who could not sense immediately that the way in which we have treated the non-ictic episema earlier in this discussion is something which presents itself as idiomatic to musical sensitivity, without need of lengthy explanations?

In sum, then, there are no rules-of-thumb, no *a priori* definitions, nor even strict procedures . . . but merely music and nothing but music.

## 2) *Religious*

We do not need to restrict ourselves to the musical outlook, however, for although Gregorian chant must be treated as an art, we cannot forget that this art is primarily religious, and, in fact, the most completely religious art of all.

Chant is essentially designed to express the attitude of the Christian soul in the presence of its God. Therefore, the interpretation of chant will be neither true nor complete unless it is steeped in the Christian spirit.

Moreover, although we cannot deny that the chant of the Church has a profound expression which loses nothing by comparison with the power of worldly music, its general tenor remains wholly within the limits of meditation and prayer.

This, then, suffices to exclude from it the passionate outbursts or technical displays which often mark concert music.

Gregorian chant never seeks mere effect. It never presents any aspect which would call for applause. In chant, all is virginal and pure, existing only for God, to Whom it is consecrated.

In practice, its interpretation should, therefore, always be proportioned, calm and serene, and although the signs of expression should be conveyed with a certain warmth of the voice, this warmth will always be a product of the soul, a characteristic of spiritual life, a kind of inner withdrawal before the Mystery which is being adored.

Does this mean to say that chant moves only within perpetual somberness which is merely intensified by the so-called signs of "expression"? It would be impossible to be present at Holy Week services or those of Christmas to maintain such ideas. Among those who know and love the chant, none will be found to say that there is more expressive or more varied music anywhere among the many kinds of religious music. We merely wish to point out that expression in chant is never cultivated as an end in itself or as an influence on the listener. It is somewhat like those statues and forms high up on the great cathedrals, invisible from the ground, whose beauty, far from being pointless, is suspended there between heaven and earth with the single aim of glorifying God.

### 3) *Contemplative*

Chant is not merely religious, however; it is contemplative. This is, in fact, its special nature which sets it apart from all the other kinds of religious music. Moreover, it is the only music which cannot be conceived without a text. It is essentially bound to a specific thought for which it provides the development, and which it, as such, completes and embellishes to perfection.

Here, then, the episema plays its most suitable role, for it is this episema which can, in the hands of the composer,

serve to give emphasis to this or that aspect of the mystery proposed for our contemplation, and in this way, to direct our thought and our souls.

There are some episemas which contain a whole spirituality to themselves.

Among these is that of the word *corda* in the *Alleluia: Veni Sancte Spiritus* of the Feast of Pentecost. Here the whole mystery of the intimate sanctification of souls by the Holy Spirit is brought to bear in this wonderful master-stroke.

The same is true in the Antiphon *Rex pacificus* of First Vespers of Christmas. What an aspiration there is in this simple episema on *vultum*. We feel here the passing of the sentiment of Advent, this Advent so long extended toward the Face which is now to be shown to us this very night.

We could give countless cases of the way in which the composers have set apart the words *Deus* and *Dominus* throughout the repertoire, and particularly, perhaps, in the masses of the Pentecostal season. These are veritable profundities of doctrine and love.

Each reader, moreover, can prove these facts for himself. It only is necessary to page through his chant book. Then, particularly if it can be compared with the manuscripts, he will soon be saturated with that spirit of former Christian ages whose supernatural sensitivity was so keen and so profound.

Sometimes, however, the reader will be held an instant by a puzzling point. Why such-and-such an episema? How can we explain the emphasis given to this word or that neume, the significance of which, at first glance, seems very small?

Such is the case of the Antiphon *Omnes vos fratres estis* of Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent. In this long piece, a single word is strongly stressed, the word *vobis*. At first

this seems pointless, but in reading the Gospel, from which the text of this Antiphon is taken, we immediately see the opposition drawn by Christ between his own: *vos*, and the still unbelieving masses. The episemas of *vobis* then assume their fullest meaning, and we can here sense the tenderness of the Lord for those whom He has chosen.

Actually we have in such cases more than mere details.

This is a mentality, a point of view, which is revealed by these nuances, and since the Church actually takes these to herself when she makes this chant her official prayer, we can say that this is the mentality of the Church itself, that is, the Christian spirit in its most authentic and universal aspects.

What is more, the episema, we note, is a principle of interpretation, but in the hands of the Church, it becomes something like an expression of its standard of teaching, a permanent teaching which gives to us its own interpretation, the only really "official" one.

It must always be, then, with the soul of an obedient and humble child that we approach the study and performance of Gregorian chant, seeking to find in it and to draw from it the voice of our Holy Mother the Church, even to the intonation with which she speaks to us of her Spouse and by which she draws us toward Him.

### Conclusions

Such are the principle aspects of the episema and some of the roles which it can play in the performance of chant.

Once this sign has been restored to the light in which it was born, it seems that it could no longer be an obstacle or a stumbling block, but, on the contrary, a valuable indication from which a little reflection and taste should be able to draw wonderful resources.

Let us repeat, however, that chant cannot be understood apart from prayer and contemplation. This is why it can

bring together such subtlety of feeling and such depth of expression, but it is also the reason why it is so hard to sing it well, that is, to sing it "accurately".

Because it was written by holy men, we must be holy to understand it. In general, it is only those who hate solitude and silence who are bored by Gregorian chant. If, too, we must have a pure heart to understand the great works of Bach and Mozart, how much more reason is there to attain a high degree of elevation and interior purity to penetrate to the depths of this chant.

Here we have once again the lesson which we get from any repeated contact with ancient Christian traditions. Across the centuries the origins of the Church bear on to us in everything passed down from those days an indelible character of holiness and greatness, a divine mentality.

May this brief return to the sources of Gregorian expression and the study which we have made of the traditional signs used to indicate this expression increase in us the understanding and love of these treasures as well as give us the impetus to use them more fully.

# GREGORIAN RHYTHM AND TERMINOLOGY

by Dom Joseph Gajard

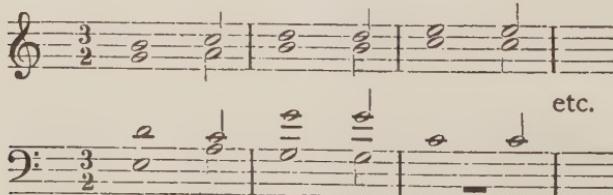
Choirmaster of Solesmes Abbey

[Editor's note: This article is presented to English-speaking readers for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of correct, precise and consistent terminology in studying a subject like Gregorian chant. This article points out only one of the many problems, but those who teach chant according to the Solesmes method know that confusion of terminology is largely to blame for slow progress, low marks or failures. The flexibility and variety of the English language permits a dangerous lapse into generalizations and approximations. This will not do, for the study of chant depends on precision and consistency. The more basic **notions** of its theory depend on philosophical clarity and precision, quite impossible without a consistent and pre-determined terminology and system of definitions.]

"Is it really possible to have such a thing as a 'beat' in Gregorian melodies?" was a question recently asked of me by an English friend, greatly upset to hear me speak of "up-beat" (arsis) and "down-beat" (thesis). "These terms," said he, "apply to ordinary music, but it seems absurd to use them for Gregorian chant, the technique of which has nothing in common with this particular technical detail."

Briefly, here is the crux of his argument:

"When you have two or three simple polyphonic measures:

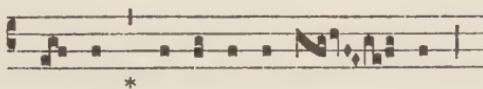


"You would conduct them with this beat-pattern:



"On each down-beat, there is an accent.

"Now here is a little section of a gradual from your own Solesmes books:



"Where are the 'down-beats' and the 'up-beats'?" Solesmes has perfected the means for singing Gregorian chant, and these means are completely different from those for singing 'modern' music. We cannot direct chant with 'up-beats' and 'down-beats,' and these English expressions can apply only to the first diagram above.

"I think these terms are too much a part of 'modern' music to be used in Gregorian chant. I cannot see how we can speak of 'measures' in chant. The word 'measure' in English indicates the regular divisions of the music, divisions which are not found in Gregorian chant."

\* \* \*

The problem, then, is very clearly presented. Basically the entire question of the reality and the nature of Gregorian rhythm is put in question. This is why, although this question is not new, and although its answer is accessible to all, that I think that it may be worthwhile to go over it briefly here. These are, in fact, basic concepts to which we cannot refer too often.

In all, there are three points to clarify:

- 1) the reality of Gregorian rhythm, analyzed in detail,
- 2) its nature,
- 3) the terminology which is best suited to express it correctly.

I shall take up each one of these in turn.

\* \* \*

### I. Reality of Gregorian Analytical Rhythm

There is only one true rhythm, whose general laws govern all the so-called arts of "movement": dancing, music and poetry. This is why the ancients, the Greeks in particular, always associated music with dancing and poetry, forming what they called the "trinity of orchesteric arts."

There is, therefore, only one kind of musical rhythm, which also applies to Gregorian chant just as it does to any other music, whether ancient, polyphonic, instrumental, modern, or such. Its applications, as I shall show, can differ according to the characteristics proper to each kind of music, but the general laws are the same.

In modern musical notation, the principal points of the rhythmic flow are indicated by the measure bar, which marks off the measures. The measures are indeed broken down into beat patterns as diagrammed above, with the single exception that the down-beat is in no sense an "accent." I shall reserve this question of intensity for later in the discussion, as I wish to consider at this point only the *fact* of the succession of the "measures."

Still, although the notation of Gregorian chant does not provide for measure bars, the chant is nonetheless composed

of a succession of "measures," exactly like modern music, except that in modern music these measures flow along regularly, in most instances, in binary or ternary organization, according to the system set up at the beginning by the composer (I refer to classical music and that which is in common use). In Gregorian chant, on the other hand, there is a continuous interplay (I do not mean alternation, but a free mixture) of binary and ternary elements at the whim of the composer. This is one of the meanings, in its most material sense, of the expression "free rhythm," which characterizes Gregorian art.

These binary and ternary elements, these two and three beat "measures," if you will, are *real*, and are both formed and indicated by beat patterns exactly as in modern music.

In order to make what I am saying clearer, I call the reader's attention to the fact that the modern two, three or four beat measure is merely a composite thing, a combination of small "measures," themselves formed of two or three simple units. Depending on the nature of this smaller groupings, the measures are classified as of binary (2/4, 3/4, 4/4) or ternary (6/8, 9/8, 12/8) subdivision. Thus the two following measures, each consisting of six equal eighth notes, are actually very different from one another from the point of view of rhythm:

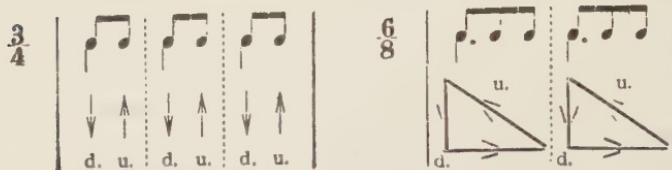


In the first case we have three binary beats; in the second there are two ternary beats, equivalent respectively to three or two "little measures," which official terminology calls "beats," and which we, with more good reason, call "compound beats," each of which has ternary or binary subdivision by nature:



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Each one also has its own down-beat and up-beat:



All music subdivides in the final analysis to such “compound beats,” formed of down-beats and up-beats.

The modern “measure” is nothing more nor less than a systematization of the universal laws of rhythm, and a very material systematization at that, as I shall mention later on.

This “rhythm” itself is a broad concept of movement which moves by graded “steps.” No composer, modern or ancient, can escape this primordial law, but each one is perfectly free to organize his steps as he himself feels them to be. He may make them binary or ternary at his pleasure, grouping them in twos, threes, fours, or even fives . . . it is his own choice to make. Each of these particular rhythmic organizations, established by the composer, has its own organization, different from certain others. They are a selection made by the composer from the countless means of expression at his disposal, but they all depend, in final evaluation, on the law of rhythm (a succession of impulses and reposes), of which they are merely the application. Even syncopations, by the very interference they bring to the normal flow of rhythm, throw light on the universality of the broad rhythmic law.

Gregorian chant is just as much subject to these principles as any other music is, and it, too, is subdivided in the same manner.

Here is a very simple example, the *Asperges me I, ad*

*libitum*, from the Vatican edition:

The image shows two staves of Gregorian chant notation. The top staff consists of four measures of music in common time. The lyrics are: "As- pér- ges me, Dó- mi- ne, hys-só- po et mundá- bor:". Below each note is a vertical arrow indicating its direction of sound: an upward arrow for the first note of each measure, a downward arrow for the second, and so on. In the fourth measure, there is a complex downward-pointing arrow that loops around the notes. The bottom staff also has four measures of music in common time. The lyrics are: "la- vá- bis me, et su- per ní- vem de- al-bá- bor.". Similar vertical arrows are placed below each note, and in the third measure, there are two large, overlapping diagonal arrows pointing downwards.

It is, then, in no way “absurd” to speak of up-beats and down-beats in regard to Gregorian chant. It is the contrary which would be “absurd,” that is, the denial of real rhythm in Gregorian chant, a rhythm which is absent from no musical or poetic composition whatsoever.

Let us add, however, in order to give the whole viewpoint, but without making it a stopping point for our discussion, that these “compound beats,” while preserving their individuality and distinct internal structure, are not grouped automatically in twos, threes or fours as in modern measures, but in much more flexible arrangements, complex but real, which are “compound rhythms,” true organic units of the phrase-structure.

Modern writers have conceived the idea of inserting these “compound beats” in a purely material framework, the measure, an organization of two, three or four beats or more,

of which a "first beat" returns at a determined interval (which, moreover, to make matters worse, is called with no sound reason the "strong beat"), marked ordinarily by the measure bar. Let us note that the measure thus understood often corresponds to no counterpart in actual music, at least in great and beautiful music. No doubt this is the notational system to which modern writings will remain faithful, but this is only a matter of convention. The measure bar is not much more than a simple place-mark of material nature which enables the performers to stay together in performance, but the bar does not represent anything real or necessarily audible.

I shall not consider here, of course, more material kinds of music which depend on strong percussion, such as military marches, popular dances, marching songs and the like. These are all things which can have their beauties, but they do not represent the whole ideal of musical art!

How much better-orientated were the ancients in avoiding this squareness by grouping their "beats" in compound rhythms where nothing interfered with the music's flexible and absolute freedom:

As-pér- ges me, Dó- mi-ne, hyssó- po et mundá- bor :

la- vá- bis me, et su-per ní- vem de- al-bá- bor.

For those who wish to pursue the matter further, I suggest the various methods, in particular my *Notions de rythmique gregorienne*, page 33 and thereafter.

## II. The Nature of Rhythm

Here we have, then, a first-established point, the existence of a precise rhythm in Gregorian chant.

What is the *nature* of these compound beats, or more precisely, of the note which begins them, the down-beat?

My friend said: "On each down-beat, there is an accent."

No, this is just the point; *there is no accent here! The down-beat is not a stronger note.*

The theory of rhythm of intensity, that is, formed of a series of strong and weak beats, is, I know, the prevailing one in a number of teaching systems today. It is nevertheless radically wrong, absolutely in contradiction with the ensemble of musical and poetical works of our culture. It holds true, in fact, only in marching music,—which is not exactly the entirety of music! Outside of marching and dance music, it has no meaning.

Rhythm is an affair of *movement*, not *intensity*.

I cannot demonstrate the question here, and I limit myself to reference to the many works which treat the question *ex professo*. These include most of the methods of chant according to the Solesmes principles. I shall make only a few pertinent remarks at this point.

These "compound beats," as I have said before, are not the basic rhythmic cells. The modern musician who thinks that the "beat" (what we call a compound beat or little measure) is the basic cell of rhythm, as the first constituent entity of this rhythm, is wrong. The compound beat, written between two measure bars,

is not a true unit. As its name says, it is "compound," an aggregate of two rhythmic fractions. The true rhythmic cell is the elementary rhythm, the relationship of impulse to repose, which straddles the measure bar:

The compound beats are produced by the junction, on the ictus, of these elementary rhythms, the basis of all rhythmic synthesis. In reality, the real characteristics of the first beat of the compound beat, the down-beat, are those which belong to it as the *point-of-arrival of the preceding impulse*. This is a matter of movement, not intensity. This down-beat has, therefore, no self-defining relationship with intensity. It is neither strong nor weak . . . it is something of another order. It may be strong or weak according to the will of the composer, and, in Latin rhythmics, according to the quality (accented or not) of the syllable which accompanies it. If it falls together with a tonic accent, it will be intensive; if it falls on a word-final, it will be weak.

Force, then, has no special role in the rhythmic scheme. It can fall as easily on the up-beat as on the down-beat. It is *added to* the rhythm, but *it is not a constituent part of it*. I shall take the liberty of referring the reader to my *Notions de rythmique*, in which I have tried to explain the mechanism of the rhythmic synthesis in detail.

This is, moreover, true of all music, Gregorian or otherwise, and of all poetry.

The entire controversy over Gregorian rhythm in past years has revolved about this very nature of Gregorian rhythm and the *place of the Latin tonic accent* in the measure, some scholars putting it always and by rule on the so-called "strong beat," and the others, like Solesmes, placing it indifferently on the up-beat or down-beat. The factor which gives chant its "marvelous lightness and fluidity" is, on one hand, the absolute precision of the rhythm, as I have described it above, and on the other, the absolute independence of the rhythm from intensity, or, if you will, of the tonic accent of the Latin text and the rhythmic down-beat.

Let us make a comparison, for example, of the end of the antiphon *Asperges me*;

- A) according to the non-intensive theory of rhythm, with the accent on the up-beat, and;

B) according to the intensive theory, with the accent always on the down-beat:

The image shows two musical examples, A and B, in G clef. Example A consists of three measures in common time (indicated by a '4'). The first measure has a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The second measure has a sixteenth note followed by a eighth note. The third measure has a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. Below the first measure is the text "et su-per ní-". Below the second measure is "vem". Example B consists of three measures. The first measure is identical to example A. The second measure has a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The third measure has a single eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. Below the first measure is "et". Below the second measure is "su-per". Below the third measure is "ní-vem".

Do we not have, in this second treatment, without going into the effects of the syncopation, a loss of all lightness and "lift"?

This difference of treatment cannot leave anyone indifferent who is sensitive to the language of music, and it clearly shows, it would seem to me, the reality of the rhythmic subdivision and its importance. Depending on the choice of one system or the other, the entire meaning of the piece, from the esthetic standpoint, is altered, and, moreover, to neglect systematically these details of interpretation is to take from the piece its value as art and one of its most authentic charms. In sum, this alteration of its nature is very serious, and deals with its very structure.

This, perhaps, will reassure those who are tempted to bypass detailed analysis and everything that they consider to be calculated nuisance, or at least, useless dissection of the melodic line. In reality, as I have pointed out briefly before, all music is thus formed, and it has never entered the mind of anyone to complain about it.

Must we recall that the ictus, too, is no material factor, no repeated point of constant value, but merely a simple moment in the succession of beats, recognized often only by the intellect, but which is nonetheless vital for the understanding of the very structure of the piece?

Let us realize in passing . . . regardless of how paradoxical this may seem, that by establishing the need in the Gregorian melody itself to study even the finest points of

detail, Dom Mocquereau restored in the same process its freedom of movement and its whole beauty. He gave chant back its rightful place in musical culture, which nobody would want to deny it now. As M. Le Guennant has remarked, it is this minute analysis alone which makes synthesis possible. This is why no one before Dom Mocquereau had conceived of this precision and flexibility existing together, this nuance, this finish, this lightness and expressive power which we admire in the chant today. We might add, too, that in doing this Dom Mocquereau rendered a significant service to music in general, for it brought it to more fully recognize the facets of its own structure and its own organic principles, for, as we have said before, there is only one real rhythm.

\*  
\* \* \*

### III. The Terminology of Rhythm

From everything we have said so far, we are now obliged to give each of the beats of the fundamental rhythm a *name* which will be in accord with its nature.

We cannot speak of "strong beats." There is no such thing.

We cannot speak of "accented" beats, either, or of "unaccented" ones. I have just pointed out that there is no special beat which takes the accent exclusively, but rather that the accent can fall on either up-beats or down-beats.

We cannot, therefore, talk about a *rhythmic accent* for the down-beat. There is no "rhythmic accent," since the word "accent" evokes in itself the idea of intensity, force and related concepts. Intensity, exterior to the constitution of the "rhythm," is in no sense reserved for the down-beat, but can be placed wherever the composer desires.

We must, then, find of necessity a terminology which will never raise a question of intensity. We must use words

which indicate the *place* of a note in the measure, without prejudicing its intensive or non-intensive nature.

In the French of the Solesmes scholars we have the words:

elan	retombee
arsis	thesis
leve	pose
	appui
	frappe
	touchemen
	ictus

In English, what shall we use as terms to be *precise as to the place and indifferent as regards intensity?*

Those which I have used in the course of these pages seem to me to be quite clear and excellent:

up-beat              down-beat

and these are, I think, the words regularly used by rhythmic theorists, in chant as well as in modern music. See, for example, the translation by Dom Dean of my *Notions de rythmique*. If there are other terms which are better, very well, but it is important that they make no allusion to intensity or a possible accentuation. The words "accented" and "unaccented," and for the down-beat, the word "stress" are to be discarded without question.

These notes are obviously very incomplete. Perhaps they will suffice, however, to answer the problem raised at the beginning. Should they help to convince those who speak of rhythm to be more careful of the precision of their terms, they will not be entirely pointless.

## **GREGORIAN CHANT IN THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

by Auguste Le Guennant  
Director of the Gregorian  
Institute of Paris

It is possible to consider Gregorian chant from an exclusively musical point of view. The variety of its modes, the flexibility of its rhythm, the formal beauty of its melodies and their deeply expressive character are sufficient explanation of the influence which chant has exerted and which it continues to exert in the growth of contemporary art, as well as the elements of regeneration which this growth has drawn from it.

Yet this is only one aspect of the matter. To estimate the value and understand the importance of the Gregorian movement as it is growing today in various countries and in France, we must realize that this movement does not stem from the admiration of a few artists for an art which is perfect on all points, nor does it come from the desire of these artists to reveal the beauty of this music to their fellow men. It is the Church itself which has brought about this movement with a very definite goal in mind: the renovation of Christian spirit through the Liturgy "which is the first and indispensable source", and in particular, through the restoration to honor of Gregorian chant in the celebrations of solemn services of the cult.

Music — in any of its forms, for that matter — is merely one of the factors of a much broader problem, essentially linked with the social life of the Catholic Church.

In regard to public worship, chant is not something ornamental or optional, like, for example, the extension of the lighting on the occasion of certain more important feasts of

the liturgical cycle. On the contrary, sacred music “*is an integral part of the solemn liturgy*”; Saint Pius X has said so. His successors, too, have merely repeated literally, on this point as on many others, the very words of the *Motu Proprio* of November 22, 1903.

To take away the chant from Catholic worship is, in a way, a kind of mutilation. It makes it impossible to render God the full devotion of man as he is made, mind and senses. The participation of the faithful in the singing of the service does not, moreover, fall into the category of toleration, but is the exercise of a very real right which baptism has conferred on them.

We too often forget that the liturgy of the Church is essentially *congregational* in nature. We must reform our outlook on this point, in both theory and practice, against the bad effects produced in us by the growth of excessive individualism.

Everyone of us, of course, has his personal needs. It is far from our thoughts to eliminate from the lives of Christian people the beneficial practice of private devotions approved by the Church. Such devotions are not merely legitimate; they are necessary. Romano Guardini, moreover, in *L'Esprit de la liturgie*, has stressed the serious consequences of the error which would be committed in basing Christian life uniquely on the manifestations of congregational devotion.

Admitting this, however, we must take care not to fall into the opposite excess of sitting in the church as “silent spectators”, as Pius XI has said. It is because of the fact that our attitudes and dispositions are too often of this silent type that there has come about a gradual separation between the priest and the people, the sanctuary and the nave. The members of the congregation have become almost like strangers to the celebration of the mysteries, and the very symbols of the liturgical gestures and actions have come to lose their meaning in the eyes of the people, the meaning which is the very reason for the use of these symbols.

When we speak of *a symbol*, we refer to an external sign which represents a profound reality which this symbol aids us in understanding. In order for this to be accomplished, we must grasp the relationship between the symbol and the fact it represents . . . it is this very link which escapes us in far too many cases.

This is so true that the problem we are faced with, and of which the participation of the faithful in the liturgy through singing is only one aspect, is much more a problem of dogmatic re-education rather than musical re-education. Indeed, it is not enough that we instruct the faithful to sing in church and provide them with the means to do so. We must, above all, make them understand the reasons for singing by restoring in them the notion of the Mystical Body to which they belong. They must see the Mystical Body as binding them all together, although they may never come to know the beautiful writings of Peguy on the question, and they must recognize this Mystical Body as formed by the Church into an organized society working toward a common goal which is the salvation of all its members.

The problem of congregational singing is a problem of a *social order*.

From this point of view arises the concern of the Church in regard to sacred chant. And if, without excluding any kind of congregational sung prayer (within the limits and rules established), the preference of the Church is for Gregorian chant, we must see that this is because it is the only form of such music which combines *all* the qualities which we have a right to expect of truly liturgical music; it is a chant integrated to the celebration of public, congregational worship. In particular, Gregorian chant is the only form of sung prayer which achieves in its fullness that unanimity, that union of hearts and souls from which everything else flows as from a well-spring, and by which all else is easily explicable. This is the unity which was the supreme desire of Our Lord on the eve of His death: *ut unum sint . . .*

It is for the purpose of associating ourselves to *the prayer of the Church*, making us participants in it as the Church makes us participants in the Body of Christ, that the Church asks us to "restore to the people the understanding and practice of Gregorian chant". Chant, as we have said elsewhere, transmits the message of mankind to God, and the message of God to mankind.

At the foundation of this mystery of interchange, which it governs and helps regulate, is the Church, with its essential character of *catholicity*. It is this very integration within the profound life of the Church which gives Gregorian chant, beyond all question, one of its most important and unique characteristics. Indeed, by consecrating chant to its service, the Church has marked it with a permanent quality of spiritual savor which takes away none of its proper artistic value, but which serves to raise it to a higher plane at which the human and divine are blended in a harmonious whole which we shall find nowhere else to such a high degree.

Yet, quite simply above all this, and quite naturally, too, we should not be surprised to find ourselves at ease in such an atmosphere. It is not hard to find the reason. Although completely impregnated with theology because of the texts which it embellishes and enlightens to the extent that "the spirituality of the Scriptures" flows through it, Gregorian chant was made and remains true to the scope of the human being. Not a human being in a pure state of existence, a kind of abstract superman, but a real man, bound by his corporal needs for a time, and vulnerable in soul, mind and senses . . . a man in whom each of us can, in the final analysis, recognize something of himself.

The result of this "humanity" of nature is that the spirituality of Gregorian chant is very easily and directly absorbed by man, to such a point that it is often the simplest soul who profits the most from it.

A further result is that Gregorian chant does not really take on its full significance and exert its fullest influence ex-

cept when integrated with the liturgy for which it is made. Its purpose is to give life to our churches — the building and the faithful assembled in it. In this way it creates between the stone of the church edifice and the souls of the baptized faithful a harmony and blend so intimate that it has formed the basis of the theme of the hymn for the feast of the Dedication, as well as the parallelism which is the root of all the prayers of the mass for that feast. This is a harmony and blend to which Father Sertillanges has given these enthusiastic words:

“Prayer is the inner life of these sublime architectural masterpieces. Its rhythm flows with the age of these stones, which endure only for God. Its wisdom is the goal of that impassioned wisdom which Gothic art has revealed to us, and it fills with its own harmony the measured spaces, the architectural laws of which have been discovered by man. The music of voices, the music of the stones, and the yet more moving music of souls, all respond to one another, and the very life of God is here intermingled. The whole being is blended with this liturgy which opens upon and promises an eternal life.”

It is not difficult to see, from the brief considerations which we have just set forth, the high importance which we must give to the present movement of liturgical restoration, on a broader plan than heretofore envisioned. This movement contributes powerfully to the safeguarding and maintenance, in a world which is more and more in danger from materialistic philosophies, of the primacy of spiritual values and the inalienable rights of the spirit, the necessary foundations of any true civilization.

In this regard the Church shows us, with all the authority of which she is the repository, the way of salvation in all its aspects. Let us not remain indifferent to her insistence that we develop a more profound, ardent, enlightened and charitable inner life. The Church offers the means to achieve this ideal to each of us through the use of Gregorian chant. If

we do not close our minds to its beneficial influence, it will little by little achieve within us its work of spiritual enrichment.

We shall then understand better, because we shall be living its meaning, the observation of St. Augustine: *Song is the fruit of love.*

## THE MONASTIC ANTIPHONARY

by Rev. Jean Jeanneteau

[Editor's Note: In any school of higher studies in the field of liturgical music, work in Gregorian chant is carried into the more advanced field of modality or paleography by way of the *Monastic Antiphonary*. This is because the *Vatican Antiphonary* is often unreliable in certain aspects. Anyone who has ever worked with the writings or enjoyed the teachings of Henri Potiron or his disciples knows that the Vatican editions are full of errors in melodic and paleographic restoration. These errors are serious matters in the study of modality, for they convey many false impressions unless the student is forewarned. The Vatican edition is to be studied, then, in comparison with the *Monastic Antiphonary*. The latter volume is, of course, limited to music of the Office, and it cannot be used for direct comparison with the chants of the Mass as found in the commonly used *Liber Usualis*. The basis of the errors may be discovered in work with the *Antiphonary*, however, and this uncovering of principles will make many errors in the mass chants readily apparent. The processes cannot be discussed here, but the reader is referred to the various publications on modality of Henri Potiron and to the courses in modal analysis offered by schools teaching the Solesmes method.]

The *Monastic Antiphonary* gives us a view of present-day progress of Gregorian research, and its study makes a better interpretation of the Vatican edition possible.

Certain facts, noted here, may seem surprising. The reader must realize, however, that the *Monastic Antiphonary*, the fruit of a long study and a great deal of work, is not a volume published without serious thought. To understand it, however, one must have gone through the preceding stages of study. It would seem imprudent to expand these ideas too

much under pretext of scientific exposition or improvement. We can only touch upon them here.

Today we sing from the Vatican edition. The *Gradual* was published in 1907, the *Antiphonary* in 1912. We use the Vatican edition with the addition of the Solesmes rhythmic signs.

Paleographic studies, however, continue to grow. In 1934 the *Monastic Antiphonary* appeared, the one which is placed in the hands of the visitor who attends services at Solesmes. What new information does this volume contain?

For us, who do not sing from it, the *Monastic Antiphonary* contains very precious indications which make it possible to give a better interpretation to the Vatican edition, and it is in this regard that we shall study it.

One example will quickly make it clear as to the scope and worth of this study. Here are two versions of the beginning of the same antiphon:

Vatican  
Antiphonary

Monastic  
Antiphonary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

As- cen- dén- te Je- su in na- ví- cu- lam,

- 1) The clef is not on the same line. This second notational procedure makes it possible to restore the original melody through the elimination of the "leading-tone" effect at point No. 6. To achieve the same audible effect, the older notation would have had to use an E flat, impossible in chant notation.

- 2) The punctum has a new form. This is the "liquefiant" punctum:

3) The culminating virga is replaced with a new neume, the oriscus, used in the Solesmes editions as early as 1903:

4) a) A melodic variation. We can see, by imagining both versions to be in the same "key", that is, written out on *fa*, that the B flat at point No. 4 in the Vatican version is replaced by a *la* in the Monastic version. This is more than a simple melodic variation of passing importance. There is a conclusion of modal importance to be drawn from it. The recitation which is made on the B flat in the Vatican edition (3, 4, 5) is now restored to *la*, and the B flat at No. 3 is merely a passing note, a light melodic lift which the oriscus here specifically calls for. Moreover, the effect of the leading tone, foreign to Gregorian style, is avoided.

b) Regarding the compound beats, this melodic and neumatic variant makes an important modification. In the Vatican version the ictus would fall on the culminating virga, by application of a rule found often in methods books and which is often misunderstood. The two B flats (3 and 4) of the Vatican version would make one compound beat, and the clivis of *Je-* would make another. Actually, it is nothing of the sort in the new version, and the change is important. In the *Monastic Antiphonary* the oriscus at No. 3 is on the up-beat, the ictus falls on the *la*, the modal recitation tone, coincident with the word final.

5) A melodic and rhythmic variant (punctum in place of the clivis). The syllable *Je* is on the up-beat and the concluding clivis of *su* carries the more important weight of the thetic descent.

6) Melodic variant of modal importance. The cadence of the original, with its leading tone effect, is eliminated, and instead of *tritus*, the line ends in *tetrardus*.

7) A quarter-bar instead of the original half-bar of the erroneous Vatican. The quarter-bar conforms better with the meaning and punctuation of the text.

We can see from this single characteristic example a kind of summary of the light shed on our work by the *Monastic Antiphonary*, a summary which we shall now take point by point. The *Monastic Antiphonary* contributes new information, new improvements of these kinds:

- a) melodic: 1, 4, 5, 6
- b) modal: 1, 4, 6
- c) neumatic and expressive: 2, 3
- d) rhythmic: 3, 4, 5.

### Simple Passing Melodic Variants

These are very numerous, for example, the *Veni Creator*. Sometimes we have entirely new melodies. This does not change in any way our use of the Vatican version. What interests us for our study, our culture, is the effect of modal modifications, and these are many.

### Modal Changes

#### *The B flat and B natural*

a) We know the importance of the single flat which is used as an accidental in Gregorian chant, the one applied to the B. The B flat, like the B natural, has a modal importance, or rather a hexachordal importance, the "flat" being much less important than the B natural, as the "natural" hexachord is much more independent and autonomous. These accidentals can also be simple passing changes without modal or hexachordal importance, in the sense we attribute to these words. The B flat is primarily a device of transposition, and was not used until a comparatively late period as an artifice to avoid the melodic tritone and to "sweeten" the melodic line. Instead of *artifice*, we might say *alteration* of the original authentic melodies.

b) We know, too, that, thanks to this flat, we can have a kind of *hidden chromaticism* within the classic diatonicism of

## GREGORIAN REVIEW

the Gregorian melodies. The truly chromatic succession: B flat to B natural, does not exist as such, of course, but the use of both notes within neighboring melodic fragments, each of which is diatonic, is a fact. This is, of course, not very frequent, and it is subtle and almost camouflaged when it occurs, but it is certainly not negligible in either modal analysis or in treating of the expression. As examples we may quote the antiphons of the *Apud Dominum* type, the introit *Exaudi* (Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension), the communion *Cantabo* (Second Sunday after Pentecost), the introit *Circumdederunt* (Septuagesima), and the communion *Beatus servus* (Confessor non-Pontiff).

c) Moreover, to verify this chromaticism, we must have authentication of the B flat, and on this point the Vatican edition is often wrong or even contradictory. Without having access to an authentic version, we must avoid drawing conclusions, and above all basing any general notions or evaluations on the Vatican editions without very careful qualifications. What we shall say as regards the melodies and the modality is equally true of the neumatic formation or the rhythm. Thus, in many cases, we would be tempted to call a mode in a Vatican version of a piece "protus" on *sol* because of the application of the B flat, but is this B flat which is the basis of our decision always authentic?

Let us examine the two first phrases of the introit *Lux fulgebit* of the Mass at Dawn of Christmas, and omit the two B flats, which are not authentic. Let us analyze the two versions modally:

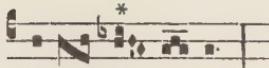
Vatican version:

Lux fulgé-bit hó-di-e su-per nos : qui-a natus est

Authentic version:

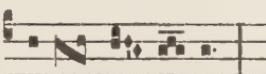
Lux fulgé-bit hó-di-e su-per nos : qui-a natus est

Vatican version:



nobis Dó-mi-nus.

Authentic version:



Vatican version:

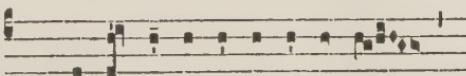
Authentic version:

Following the Vatican version we would be obliged to say: an intonation which is modally imprecise, then a pseudo-cadence on *la*, in Protus, and in the B natural hexachord, then on *sol* in *protus*, B flat hexachord. The authentic version, on the other hand, gives a real *tetrardus*, fully homogenous and very bright in color. Both the modal and esthetic analysis changes, and it is obvious that the first version as given by the Vatican edition is wrong, although scholarly. This example, often found in the editions, is characteristic. A true chant scholar should recognize it.

The search for the authentic B flats is a specialty of the paleographer, and the research touches upon both the evolution of notation and that of the scale. The *Monastic Antiphonary* is very valuable to us from this point of view.

d) Without getting into a complete listing, let us give a few examples of this research which are worthy of note:

The beginning of the antiphon *Posuerunt*, which, in the Vatican has two flats, becomes in the Monastic version:



and the same applies to all the antiphon intonations of this type, the *Ave Maria*, and therefore also the intonations of the *Gaudemus* type, *Statuit*, etc., which become similar to the version already given by the Vatican edition for the hymn *Sacris solemniis*.

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The same holds true for the end of the high melisma of the "O" antiphons at the end of the Advent season, and for the antiphon *O Doctor*, where we must imagine a B natural.

## The Leading-tone Effect

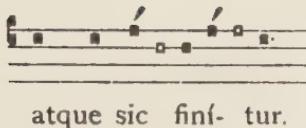
On the other hand, certain flats have been added, but as corrections of the leading-tone effect, as in *Ascendente* above. This leading-tone effect, one of the vital elements of the modern scale, which contains two semitones, is absolutely foreign to Gregorian composition by its very nature. Therefore the leading-tone effect of the Vatican versions of *O quam gloriosum . . . quocumque ierit* (All Saints), *Virgo potens . . . armatura fortium* (*Holy Rosary*) is eliminated. In these cases, as in the antiphon *Ascendente*, we have a better modality, a *more authentic form of tritus*. It is therefore somewhat removed from our modern major scale.

## Modal Recitation Notes, the Tenors

On this point the modification is even more important. It concerns the very framework of our modal classifications, particularly that of *deuterus*.

a) Recitations on *do*, common in third-mode deuterus, are often lowered to B natural in the Monastic version, as this is a more ancient and authentic process. The instability of the note B, easily changed, which became, as years passed, flattened in many cases, combined with the growing magnetic power of a leading-tone-to-tonic effect as our modern scale evolved, brought about this predominance of the *do* as dominant of the third mode, on which, according to the Vatican edition, we sing the dominant of the psalm. Here, now, is the "new" psalm formula of the third mode, or rather the authentic ancient one:

Terti-us Modus sic incipi-tur, et sic flécti-tur. + et sic me- di- á-tur: \*

**Monastic Antiphony**

The version currently sung from the Vatican is more recent. This restoration of the lower tenor note takes place in many classical formulas of the chant repertoire. Here, for example, is a typical third mode intonation formula:

Monastic version



Compare this with the intonation of the *Tantum ergo* or the antiphons of the first mode like *Tu es pastor ovium*.

b) In the fourth mode a similar modification appears. The recitations on *fa* become, in the restored version, recitations on *mi*, as we found them already in the Matins of Holy Week, published in 1922, for example for the Responsory of Holy Saturday, *Aestimatus sum*, which resembles the Monastic version of the *Subvenite*. Compare the Vatican and Monastic versions of the *Te Deum . . . Salvum fac populum*, antiphons of the seventh mode on C, antiphons *Serve nequam*, *Jerusalem gaude*, *Proprio*. The antiphon *Ascendente* has shown us an example of the authentic recitation on *la* instead of B flat. We should remember these examples and this more extensive knowledge of *deuterus*, in regard to the modality.

This modal restoration is sometimes facilitated by transpositions, by changes of clef: for example, the antiphon *Ascendente*.

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All these changes, these improvements, have made it possible to obtain a better understanding of modality as a whole, that is, the modal theory, as we would say. A very interesting result becomes apparent: that our modal theory founded on the eight "scales" is approximate and does not take all the facts into consideration, although at the beginning of elementary studies in the chant it is absolutely necessary from the pedagogical standpoint.

Indeed, besides our usual eight modes, the *Monastic Antiphonary* mentions an "altered fourth mode", that is, a new classification. This takes into account the antiphons of the *Laeva ejus* type, which are so numerous in the repertoire (they are nearly one hundred in number). Even Gevaert in his day called them "derouted cantilenas", although he was wrong as to their restoration and the interpretation of this "derouting". Here is one of them as restored by the *Monastic Antiphonary*:

iv altéré

Apud Dóminus \* mise-ri-córdi-a, et copi- ó-sa apud e-um  
redémpti-o.

Here is what Dom Gajard has to say regarding these antiphons (in the *Paleographic Musicale*, vol. XV, p. 13): "In reality, they are neither of the seventh nor the fourth modes, although they borrow from both. They do not belong to any of the eight ecclesiastic modes of the classical system, but to that group of Gregorian pieces which 'break the limits of the modal theory'. They are a mode apart, *sui generis . . .*"

We mean precisely what we say when we say "break the limits of the modal theory". This, too, is an effect of modal nature from the restoration, and we are ready to admit that

we must readjust our modal understanding, make it less rigid, more precise, in order to come into contact with the inspiration and genius of the composer and to follow him step-by-step in his "modulations".

### The Esthetic Aspect

What effect does the Monastic edition have from the esthetic, the expressive point of view?

We find that the melodies have a "more austere" flavor, a "more elevated" atmosphere. They are, in fact, more authentic, more solid and pure of line, just as the walls of a fine cathedral are when stripped of the gaudy paint added by a misguided later generation. It is not surprising that those who know this musical art should be enchanted by the more accurate restoration, for just as the temple of God, restored to its original purity seems more beautiful, more prayerful and more sincere, so, too, the Gregorian melody will edify its listeners more completely to the extent of its greater spiritual inspiration.

### New Neumes

The *Monastic Antiphonary* contains new forms of neumes.

- a) The apostropha re-appears in the form of a broadened comma, similar to its form in the manuscripts: ♫
- b) The oriscus, already used in the early Gradual of 1903 and the Kyriale of 1905, looks as though it were drawn on the bias in comparison with the square punctum. It begins with a little flair in its upper left corner and ends with a similar one in the lower right: ▶
- c) The "liquefiant" punctum bends downward slightly toward the right and ends with a flair in that direction: ↘

We are already familiar with the liquefiant forms of the neumes like the podatus, clivus and climacus. Now we find

a form which follows those by which this liquefient quality is indicated in the most ancient manuscripts for both punctum and virga. Thus the articulation proper to the junction of certain consonants or diphthongs is clearly rendered wherever it may come. The Dominican Order already has this neume in its books, used with the same meaning. The interpretation of it is the usual one for liqueficients: without diminishing the length of the note, we add a certain softness and smoothness which makes the distinct pronunciations of diphthongs and consonants possible. Note the place of these liquefient punctums in the examples already given.

d) Therefore, through the use of (a) and (b) we have new clarity in certain of the long note formations. Other long notes, without any special new form, are noted in their authentic positions, the bivirgas, for example, regarding which the Vatican edition is often inaccurate. We are all aware of the rhythmic, modal and esthetic importance of the long notes.

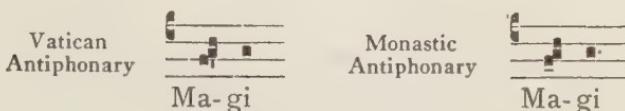
### Rhythmic Improvements

a) From the rhythmic standpoint, the *Monastic Antiphonary* is more accurate and more expressive than the Vatican edition, even when the latter is ornamented with the Solesmes rhythmic signs. We find in the newer edition many more horizontal episemas, which represent the means used to call attention to "expressive" neumes, rather than merely long notes. The vertical episemas are more numerous, and sometimes better placed. There are some changes of bars and half-bars, more in conformity with the meaning and punctuation of the text.

b) Sometimes we find new dots (*mora vocis*), notably for the rendering of *unison spondaic cadences*. Often they are indicated by two long punctums. In the antiphon *Intravit autem rex* (Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost), it is enough to compare the two words *nuptiali* and *nuptialem*. Both now have two doubled notes, on the accent and on the word final. In the same way, and the example is better, in

the antiphon *Simile est regnum caelorum homini negotiatori*, the words *caelorum*, *negotiatori*, *margaritas* and *pretiosa* now receive the true spondaic treatment which had been formerly applied to the final word *eam*.

c) Lastly, certain rhythmic modifications of neumes are given, which have even greater interest, for they are concerned with modal, rhythmic and expressive aspects simultaneously. For example, we have in the antiphon for First Vespers of the Epiphany:



The intonation of the type of *Magi*, which is a salicus in the Vatican edition, becomes a scandicus with a long first note. This fact has become a general principle for these opening neumes. This law takes into consideration the so-called *disaggregate* neumes. This disaggregation, which has an important effect, concerns only the initial scandicus.

At the end of the *Monastic Antiphonary* we find the "prolix" Responsories, in which are found not only the new neumes, and the modal of rhythmic improvements already mentioned, but also these so-called "disaggregate" neumes, which had already been expressed through the use of a horizontal episema under the ictic note in the publications of the Matins of Holy Week (1922) and of Christmas (1926). These are the *toreculus resupinus* (*porrectus praepunctis*) and the *scandicus flexus* (*toreculus praepunctis*), rendered with a separated and enlarged initial punctum. The examples are in:

- R. *Ponis nubem*, of the Ascension (*Alleluia*)
- R. *Repleti sunt*, of Pentecost (*multitudo*)
- R. *Nihil inquinatum*, of the Immaculate Conception (*speculum*)
- R. *Gaude Maria*, of the Annunciation (*virgo*)
- R. *Vidi speciosam*, of the Assumption (*columbam, aquarum, verni and rosarum*)

The year 1934, which was that in which the *Monastic Antiphonary* was published, is a special date in the history of the Gregorian restoration. After the appearance of the Vatican edition, the official point-of-departure for this restoration; the *Monastic Antiphonary*, for those of us who sing the official repertoire and would like to understand its fine points, now makes possible the ready acquisition of a feeling for Gregorian style, a more perfect knowledge of the chant. This is the authentic document now available to us, short of research in paleographic sources to which access is limited. The *Monastic Antiphonry* gives the status of present-day research as well as indications for future research. We should learn all we can from it. We may observe, too, that although the *Monastic Antiphonary* is reserved for monks from the point of view of official use, we already have, from a date preceding this *Antiphonary*, melodic and rhythmic improvements of the same kind in the Responsories of Holy Week, of the Assumption and of Christmas, published for the Roman Church, which are therefore part of the Vatican edition and printed as such for all of us in our present chant books.

The *Monastic Antiphonary* draws its accuracy, its precision, its variants, its new neumes, its new modes, from paleography. We must realize, too, that even within the use of the Vatican edition it is impossible to reach a certain level of mastery without some paleographical study. This study, however limited it may be, now seems possible and promising.

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